

“light” : Living In Good Health Together, the NIMH Multisite HIV Prevention Trial



The Research

The Science Behind the Package

“light” is a small group intervention based on the NIMH Multisite HIV Prevention Trial and has the goals of decreasing unprotected sexual intercourse and increasing condom use. Grounded in behavioral theory, the program targets three primary factors that mediate sexual risk acts 1) outcome expectancies, 2) skills, and 3) self-efficacy. The small group format allows group members to gain knowledge and to enhance and practice risk reduction skills, and the group dynamic encourages the promotion of new social norms within a safe, supportive environment.

Target Population

Ethnically diverse men and women, aged 18 or older, who are seeking initial or follow-up treatment at STD clinics and low-income women seeking treatment at neighborhood health care clinics.

Intervention

Nurses or health care educators employed by the clinic facilitate gender specific groups of 5 to 12 people in a private room within the clinic. Each of the seven 90-minute sessions begins with goal review and discussion of success and barriers, review of the previous session, preview of the current session, introduction of a skill-building exercise, skill practice and discussion, session review, and goal setting. Male and female condoms are made available to participants at all sessions. Session 1 introduces HIV knowledge and risk personalization. Session 2 identifies personal risk triggers. Session 3 focuses on problem-solving triggers. Session 4 discusses and demonstrates the use of male and female condoms. Sessions 5 and 6 develop assertive communication and negotiation skills. Session 7 reviews the previous session's skills and develops plans for risk reduction behavior maintenance, and participants receive a certificate of completion.

Research Results

The “light” intervention produced the following results among program participants:

- Significant decrease in the reported number of unprotected intercourse acts.
- Significant increase in reported condom use over time.

For Details on the Research Design

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Multisite HIV Prevention Trial Group (1998). The NIMH Multisite HIV Prevention Trial: Reducing HIV Sexual Risk Behavior. *Science*, 280, 1889-1894.



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The Intervention

A Package Developed from Science

Replicating Effective Programs (REP) is a CDC-initiated project that identifies HIV/AIDS prevention interventions with demonstrated evidence of effectiveness. REP supports the original researchers in developing a user-friendly package of materials designed for prevention providers. “light” is one of the REP interventions and is the product of extensive collaboration among researchers and a Community Advisory Board. The package has been field tested in STD clinics by non-research staff.

Core Elements

Core elements are intervention components that must be maintained without alteration to ensure program effectiveness. The core elements of “light” include:

- Reinforcement – supporting and learning from the facilitators and other group members, realizing that they are not alone in dealing with the issues of safer sex in their lives.
- Modeling - learning information through modeling by facilitators, videotapes, and each other in a safe, supportive environment.
- Goal Setting - setting specific, risk-related, behavior-change goals and gaining confidence by meeting them.
- Role Playing - practicing the skills acquired during each session, using realistic scenarios and partner responses.
- Problem-solving - applying specific techniques to situations in participants’ own lives.

Package Contents

- Operations manual providing detailed guidance for planning, conducting, and sustaining the intervention.
- Four videos: Promotional overview, Client recruitment, Modeling vignettes, and Facilitator training.
- Anatomical models and sample materials and handouts.

Intervention Orientation

Staff from user organizations attend a 2-day pre-adoption training workshop. The workshop includes an orientation to “light” and provides intensive training on how to conduct of the intervention. The workshop also allows provision of technical assistance and allows trainer and staff interaction on common issues related to implementing “light.”

Technical Assistance

To be determined

Timeline for Availability

Pilot testing of the REP package will be completed by Fall, 2002, and final versions of the REP materials will be available soon thereafter.

For More Information on the “light” Project Package

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